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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 NAIROBI 000766

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, EUR, NEA  
STATE PASS AID  
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAO](#) [SO](#) [KE](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALIA: PARLIAMENT IN BAIDOA WILL NEED --  
EVERYTHING

REF: NAIROBI 633

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR MICHAEL J. FITZPATRICK,  
REASONS 1.4 (A,B,C,D)

#### SUMMARY

1. (S) Staff at the UNDP's Rule of Law and Security (ROLS) Programme believe there is reason for very guarded optimism that the Somali Parliament can meet in Baidoa -- though perhaps not as soon as February 26. Although they see the available funding for security and logistics as completely insufficient, they believe that the town might be safe enough for the projected 3-month session to begin. The preconditions include successful outcomes in ongoing reconciliation talks among the Rahanweyn warlords, and in the discussions among the President, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker. Also required: That the Mogadishu warlords behave themselves, and that everyone keep a lookout for Jihadis. In this regard, UNDP Staff see the USG as a possible source of instability, rather than help in the process. Such a view, of course, overlooks ongoing Jihadist attacks designed to thwart efforts at establishing any semblance of law and order not under Jihadi control.  
END SUMMARY.

PRICE TAG: \$3.2 MILLION

2. (C) Somalia Watcher met February 14 with staff at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rule of Law and Security (ROLS) Programme to discuss UN-assisted preparations for the planned February 26 session of the Somali Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP). Staff included individuals with more than 15 years experience in Somalia, including in one case three years' residence in "The City of Death" -- Baidoa -- at the worst of the 1990s famine. The discussion was free and frank, including pointed criticism of perceived USG actions and inaction in Somalia.

3. (C) Staff estimated that, under current planning -- and figuring on an initial session lasting at least 90 days -- the price tag to organize the bare bones of facilities and security would run to some \$3.2 million (no breakdown was

provided). The geographic focus for the location of the meeting in Baidoa was the stretch of road leading southeast out of the town, passing along the Brown-and-Root constructed airstrip toward the town of Dinsor. ROLS staff believed that the airstrip zone provided the best hope for an area that could be relatively well secured for access and egress, allowing some control over who would get into the parliament session so that members of the TFP who might feel especially vulnerable in that part of the country to be somewhat protected. Planning was for the use of tents for the actual session and support functions. (NOTE: News reports of February 13 alluded to plans to use a dilapidated agricultural warehouse as the meeting venue; ROLS staff were to meet with the parliament's preparatory committee, just back from Baidoa, the afternoon of February 14. END NOTE.)

14. (C) Staff who experienced the Baidoa famine of the early 1990s stressed that, now as then, everything would have to be brought into the town -- especially food and water. Thus they were trying to plan how to ensure a broad distribution of food well outside the town to draw the hungry away from the politics. But the attraction of windfall profits is expected to be great -- "Those still living today will remember the last time the UN circus came to town -- Baidoa boomed for three years, then died". Such an approach, requiring external provision of everything from tents to water, will mean a heavy price tag, staff estimated.

REAL SECURITY:  
UP TO THE SOMALIS  
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15. (C) ROLS Staff stressed that the nuts and bolts of security -- where to place militia, who should patrol the streets, how to control access to the parliamentary meeting site -- would have to be left in the Somalis' hands, though ROLS was prepared to provide advice and quick training where possible and useful. Noting a request from Transitional Federal President Abdullahi President Yusuf Ahmed for 4,000 uniformed and paid "policemen" to patrol Baidoa, at ROLS expense, staff reported having told the President to be careful what he asked for. They pointed out the likely destabilizing effect of having paid guys in new clothes in town -- and the warlord/MPs holding their unpaid forces out of town.

16. (C) The UNDP experts were careful to stress that the need for robust security would be in indirect proportion to the success of several discussions ongoing on February 14. The first, among the Rahanweyn Mirifle warlords of the Bakool and Bay regions, had been underway for several days in the Bakool town of Wajid, some 50 kms northwest of Baidoa (reftel A). Minister of Justice Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur (AKA "Adan Madobe) joined rival Mohamed Ibrahim Habsade to reconcile Habsade with Minister for Agriculture Hassan Mohamed Nur (AKA "Shatigudud") over a long-running dispute regarding the control of Baidoa and Bay region.

17. (C) A successful conclusion to these talks would go far to reduce the overall tensions among the militias in the immediate vicinity of the parliament's venue. It would also set a united Rahanweyn Mirifle clan the task of ensuring the region's security, giving pause to any other group that might see a reason to disrupt the meeting. (NOTE: February 14 news reports indicate that the three warlords, assisted by the February 13 arrival of the TFP Speaker -- also of the Rahanweyn Mirifle clan -- had indeed reached agreement. Elements of the accord were reported to include possibilities for the return of captured properties to previous owners (especially battlewagons and technicals), a framework for integrating the three militias, and discussions of joint security responsibilities for Baidoa. END NOTE.)

¶8. (C) The second set of talks are among the President, Yusuf; the TFP Speaker, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden; and, the Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Ali Mohamed Gedi. Gedi had been the odd man out since Yusuf and Sharif Hassen signed their Aden, Yemen accord of January 5, calling for the Parliament to finally meet inside Somalia and setting off the current political temblor. Gedi has been reported in the press as supporting the Aden Declaration, and to have come around to accept the designation of Baidoa as the site for the session of parliamentary. He is said to still be holding out for a key role in the organization of the session, particularly for control over the agenda.

¶9. (C) It is the discussions among the Mogadishu-based MPs/Ministers/Warlords, and whether they will cooperate with the Aden Declaration initiative, about which the least is known. That cooperation could come at several different levels. At the least, key warlords would state their support for the Parliament, but not actually attend the session -- as MPs, they have only one vote each, and with their small numbers, they would have little impact over the gathering of a quorum of 139 MPs. At the next level, they would attend, and urge their "clan-constituent" fellows to do so as well. At the next level of cooperation, they would assist in the security of the town by imposing their will on other militia leaders to keep their forces well away from Bay region. And at their most participatory, they would confront, in Mogadishu, the key source of threats to the session of Parliament -- violent Islamists.

#### PROTECTING AGAINST JIHAD

¶10. (S) ROLS Staff opined that, while the various clan and political factions could still descend into squabbling that

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could derail the holding of the session of parliament, it was Somalia's small group of violent Jihadis that posed the biggest potential risk to a parliament in session. In their minds, the threat was not from significant warlords in control of larger forces, such as Yusuf Siad (AKA "Indha'Adde") or even the Islamic Court militia's of Hassan Dahir Aweys. Staff speculated that the more dangerous elements would be the quieter individuals who might launch a hit team at the session. They thought the first week or two of the session might be relatively safe, but, should the parliament begin to show an ability to function, the Jihadis would consider that the TFIs could actually pose a threat to their current small but growing successes in recruitment and extension of their influence. At that point, there could be a decision to take a leaf from the insurgency in Iraq, either through the use of an IED, or a tragic first -- a suicide bomber inside Somalia, against Somalis.

¶11. (S) Staff made a direct appeal to Somalia Watcher as regards USG counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia over the next few weeks: If the USG cannot provide robust financial support through UN organizations for the holding of the session of parliament, please at least do nothing to catalyze a Jihadi attack. Staff speculated that the USG could accomplish far more in undermining the growth of violent Islam in Somalia by paying \$1 million into the UNDP fund for the ROLS program than by disbursing four times that amount to individual warlords claiming to assist in the interdiction of high-value targets (the amount Staff claimed to "know" had been paid out to one such businessman-warlord).

¶12. (S) Staff argued that the grand majority of Somali youth were still accessible to the wiles of training, work, consumer products, khat, and Western entertainment, as had been the case traditionally in the country before the onset of 15 years of chaos and war. However, they opined that

time was running out. Should the TFIs fail for lack of resources, or collapse under their own weight, the draw of anyone willing to provide some kind of order, security, and employment would be strong. Jihadi recruitment efforts would be further assisted if/when Somali youths are confronted clearly with both an indeterminate number of years with no hope for governance, and yet another example of secular failure to establish governance. Staff encouraged the USG to consider how to become financially engaged in pushing for the TFIs success. In the absence of more robust short-term engagement, UNDP Staff urged that we be very careful to not set clans against each other at this critical political moment in the hopes of a quick victory over one or two individuals.

COMMENT

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¶13. (S) COMMENT: We take issue with UNDP's suggestion that U.S. CT activities might "catalyze a jihadi attack." Jihadis have already undertaken attacks, including targeted assassinations. Indeed, UNDP's own analysis recognizes that the Jihadis pose the biggest potential threat to a parliamentary session. That is because anything suggesting a return to centralized governance in Somalia is a threat to the Jihadis. However, UNDP staff is simply reflecting what is a widely held perception within the international community: that USG efforts to counter Jihadi activities through partners in Mogadishu -- and not the Jihadis -- are generating considerable tension within the capital. They assert, with less than full information, that USG activities generated the outbreak of fighting in Mogadishu January 13 -- and predict more fighting soon. While the prognostication may be right, the underlying analysis is as shortsighted as it is widely held. For it is clear that any effort -- whether by UNDP, Somalis, or international donors, including the USG -- to support a successful session of parliament or to otherwise reduce the Jihadist threat is itself equally likely to provoke a violent response. END COMMENT.

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